

Basketball retirement: process and outcomes

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BASKETBALL RETIREMENT: PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

KEY WORDS: Sport transition, Athletic retirement, Basketball.

ABSTRACT: Retirement from a sport career represents a turning point in the life of a sportsman. The aim of this study was to determine how the process of withdrawal of professional basketball players and the factors that influence it. Using a qualitative methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 professional players focusing on their experiences during the process. Analysis of the interviews revealed the need to treat this process from a multidimensional perspective, as several factors interact. The results obtained show that the players assign great importance to the economic, academic and adjustment difficulties. Consequently, we discuss the need for specific assistance programs for these athletes, regardless of their previous professional level.

Elite sport requires years of dedication to achieve the maximum performance (Alfermann, Stambulova and Zemaityte, 2004), relegating to the background interests and other aspects (Puig and Vilanova, 2006). Every career has phases, regardless of the level achieved, producing personal and social changes and sports, beyond themselves everyday (Schlossberg, 1981), and are called sports transitions (ST) (Stambulova, 1994). The ST will have to see how a multidimensional process where factors interact emotional, social, occupational and financial (e.g., Carlin and Garcés de los Fayos, 2012; Stambulova, Alfermann, Statler, and Cote, 2009; Taylor and Ogilvie, 1994; Torregrosa, Sanchez, and Cruz, 2004). For Stambulova (2000), there are six types of ST, since sport specialization, to retreat.

The retirement is normal and inevitable (e.g., Pummell, Harwood, and Lavalley, 2008), must be analyzed taking into account variables, reasons, and adaptation to later life (Coakley, 2006). According to Heinemann (1994), the retirement consists of: a) search for new identity, b) making new relationships, and c) new social role. The causes of retirement may be injuries, age, "deselect" or personal decision (Lavalley, 2000; Taylor and Ogilvie, 1998), as well as financial, psychological and burnout (Du and Tsai, 2007). When the decision is voluntary, a) there are more options to choose from (e.g., Kerretal, 2000), b) the process is easier and might be a release (Allison and Meyer, 1988; Sinclair and Orlick, 1993), c) change of priorities (e.g., Cecic', 1998), and d) the process is longer (e.g., Kerr and Dacyshyn, 2000). In this case, there may be emotions like relief, or sadness and disappointment. Where retirement is produced by an involuntary or unpredictable cause, there are high levels of stress and more difficulty in retrofitting (Alfermann, 2000), in addition anxiety,

depression or feeling for not doing something (e.g., Fernandez, Stephan, and Fouquereau, 2006).

The preparation of the retirement could include a retirement plan (Alfermann et al., 2004) to provide control sense in view of new situations, even after an involuntary retirement (Brewer et al., 1993). One element of the plan would be academic, despite of the great sacrifice of combine studies and career (Javerlhiac, Pardo, Bodin and Fernandez Cuevas, 2010). For example, Pallares et al. (2011) researched on the retired process with water polo players, distinguishing three sorts of experience as combine or not, their studies with career and the results indicated that players who were combining found easier employment.

Therefore, our aim was to study the process of sports retirement and interacting factors in it, besides the aid needs and professional basketball players demand when faced with the retirement.

Method

The methodology for this research was qualitative (Côté, Salmela, Baria and Russell, 1993), so the use of the interpretive paradigm allowed us to know the unique experience of each individual.

Participants

Players interviewed were six males ($n = 6$). The necessary criteria for the selection of the sample were: a) to have competed at least 5 years professional level. The players had been part of the national teams, achieve medals in Continental Championships, World and Olympic Games.

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Retired players ($n = 3$), lead maximum of 5 years out of competition (e.g., Lally and Kerr, 2008). The middle age was 34.3 ± 4.22 years, 32.3 ± 0.66 years at the time of retirement, 3 years retired and 13.3 years competing.

Active players ($n = 3$) were selected from 30 years (Du et al., 2007) and 34 years (North and Lavallee, 2004), average retirement age of athletes. In this case the middle age was 33 ± 2.6 years (Park and Lavalle, 2012) and 13.3 years competing.

All players participated voluntarily, knew the approach of the study and they be agreeable to the research.

Material

The instrument used was a semi-structured interview (e.g., Torregrosa et al., 2004), designed according to the following points: a) similar studies (e.g., Stambulova, Stephan and Jäphag, 2007), b) there were taken into account cultural differences between countries that make the articles reviewed (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2004), c) there was prepared an interview, d) it was validated by 9 experts, e) then there were two pilot interviews, and f) there was established the final interview.

All players were interviewed in private by a single

investigator, and the average duration was 35 minutes and was audio taped.

Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed immediately and literally ensuring their complete and accurate record (Charmaz, 2002; Poland, 1999). The players received a copy of the interview for review with the possibility of changing (Gratton and Jones, 2004). Upon receipt of the modifications, this information was analyzed and categorized.

The reliability of the analysis was established by three independent coders, familiarize in qualitative methodology. The validity for this study was 97% inter-observer, with the coding system is made of mixed inductive and deductive (e.g., Edwards, Kingston, Hardy and Gould, 2002).

Results

The total meaning units for “sport transition: retirement” were 202, divided into two subcategories: active and retired. Thus, the scoreboard was:

Retired players		
History of life	Sport beggining	3
	Influence	4
	Opportunity	3
	Academic background	14
Withdrawal and process	Begginig	8
	Support	6
	Preparation	7
	Feelings	10
	Assitance program	5
Adaptation	Difficulties	9
	Needs	6
	Skills	12
	Identity	7
	Advantages	2
Recommendations		8
	Total	104

Table 1. Retired players.

Active players		
History of life	Sport beggining	3
	Influence	4
	Opportunity	2
	Academic background	15
Withdrawal and process	Begginig	9
	Support	7
	Preparation	3
	Feelings	11
	Assitance program	6
Adaptation	Difficulties	13
	Needs	3
	Skills	6
	Identity	4
Recommendations		9
	Total	98

Table 2. Active players.

Once showed the quantitative results, we proceed to present the most relevant results from the qualitative analysis.

1. Academic background

Players point to this factor facing the labor insertion, being aware that studies are essential once retired.

«I studied economics in the U.S., helping it force you to combine training and sports, because you must pass in order to play with your team, you have a tutor to maintain a minimum grade»

2. Feelings about the retirement

Throughout the process are feelings such as anxiety, fear, ... regard less of being active or retired.

«The sensations are rare, strange, to say "I will leave something that's what I've always done, all I've done the last 20 years of my life, but all so look for a desire to try something new»

3. Economics difficulties

The results indicate that for both active and retired players the economic question is the factor of greatest concern.

«Lose purchasing power, the input of substantial amounts and goes to have nothing. Dizzying view that the next month does not enter money»

4. Adaptation difficulties

After retirement the players tell the process to find your location.

«The first few months you feel a little, "Now what do I do?, Why should I serve?. I'm doing what I've always done, for what was good»

Discussion

The results indicated the need to treat the retirement process in a multidimensional perspective (Gonzalez and Bedoya, 2008; Stambulova, 2010), taking into account the interaction of all factors (e.g., academic, economic, social role change,...) which will determine the quality of the process.

Four of the players have a university education, despite the great difficulties encountered in combining career and studies (Javerlhiac et al., 2010). Sharing with Torregrosa et al. (2004), this study helps to break the stereotype of the athlete without education, worry to having adequate education that is repeated in all the cases analyzed and it is essential to creating an action plan (Alfermann et al., 2004). In this sense, sharing with Pallares et al. (2011), when combining studies provides career job placement after retirement. Two players got their college degree in U.S., noting the facilities to combine both activities. In this sense, it would be necessary to promote programs to help the athletes during their competitive live like *Tutoresport-UAB* program (Benet, Ratés and Tarrazón, 2006), regardless of professional level reached.

The retirement process involves emotionally charged (Du et al., 2007), appearing feelings. For retired players, the time of retired is more complicated than expected, despite feeling relief and release (Sinclair et al., 1993) to have a new lifestyle. However, the active players have contradictory feelings, they continue to perform the activity in which they have invested heavily and which are paid important, and the desire to start a new life (Allison and Meyer, 1988), despite the sense of loss (e.g., Fernandez et al., 2006).

The economic factor, quantitatively, is the component that causes more anxiety and uncertainty (Coakley, 2006), previous to the retirement as well as afterwards. The revenues are high, and usually decrease dramatically at the time of retirement (Stambulova et al., 2009), which creates stress and anxiety.

The results of this study allow us to achieve this objective, coinciding with Stambulova et al. (2009) in the analysis of the retirement from a multidimensional approach, as the emotional, social, occupational, financial and interact during the process. This approach will be instrumental in creating programs that professional help, regardless of professional level reached. This study used a sport with a high economic and social impact, analyzing two realities, active and retired players, providing a very rough knowledge of the process.

LA RETIRADA DEPORTIVA EN BALONCESTO: PROCESO Y FACTORES

PALABRAS CLAVE: Transición deportiva, Retirada, Baloncesto.

RESUMEN: La retirada deportiva representa un momento crucial en la vida de un deportista. El objetivo de este estudio ha sido conocer como es el proceso de retirada de los jugadores de baloncesto profesional y los factores que influyen en él. Utilizando una metodología cualitativa, se han realizado entrevistas semiestructuradas a 6 jugadores profesionales sobre sus vivencias durante el proceso. El análisis de las entrevistas revela la necesidad de tratar dicho proceso desde una perspectiva multidimensional, ya que son varios los factores que interactúan entre si. Los resultados obtenidos demuestran que los jugadores consideran como prioritarios los aspectos económicos, la formación académica y las dificultades de adaptación. Consecuencia de ello, se discute sobre la necesidad de crear programas de ayuda específicos para jugadores profesionales, independientemente del nivel alcanzado.

A RETIRADA DESPORTIVA NO BASQUETEBOL: PROCESSO E FACTORES

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Transição desportiva, Retirada, Basquetebol.

RESUMO: A retirada desportiva representa um momento crucial na vida de um atleta. O objetivo deste estudo foi conhecer como é o processo de retirada dos jogadores profissionais de basquetebol e os fatores que a influenciam. Utilizando uma metodologia qualitativa, foram realizadas entrevistas semiestructuradas a 6 jogadores profissionais sobre as suas experiências durante o processo. A análise das entrevistas revelou a necessidade de tratar este processo a partir de uma perspectiva multidimensional, já que são vários os fatores interagem entre si. Os resultados obtidos mostram que os jogadores consideram como prioritários os aspectos económicos, a formação académica e as dificuldades de adaptação. Consequentemente, discute-se a necessidade de criar programas de ajuda específicos para jogadores profissionais, independentemente do nível alcançado.

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